

# Economic Success Faster For Young Women

The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996, also known as the Welfare Reform Act, dramatically changed the administration of and requirements for welfare programs. One of the goals of welfare reform was to “end dependence of needy parents upon government benefits by promoting job preparation, work, and marriage.” To help reach this goal, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) officially replaced Aid to Families with Dependent children (AFDC) in 1997.

Unlike AFDC benefits, TANF benefits are tied to economic behavior, because the program requires that most adult recipients must “work” after 2 months of aid. TANF broadly defines work as labor force participation, such as working for the community or state in order to receive benefits (workfare), looking for employment or being employed. Work may also include work-related activities, such as schooling, vocational training, general skill development, or other types of training.

Nationally, the number of female adults participating in the primary public assistance program for families decreased by nearly 70% between 1996 and 2004 from 3.4 million to one million, according to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

- From 1996 to 2004, the number of mothers participating in TANF decreased by nearly 70%. In Missouri, participating mothers dropped 57% over the same period.
- For TANF recipients nationwide in 2004, nearly one out of three required to participate in work did, while another one-third did not. In Missouri, 18% of those required to participate in work activities did, while 52% did not.
- 17,682 (60%) of TANF recipients in Missouri did not work in 2004. Almost one in four were involved in work preparation (subsidized jobs, on-the-job training, work experience or community service), job search and job training/education.
- African-Americans represented a higher share of recipients of TANF benefits than whites, Hispanics or people of other race, constituting 39% of total recipient benefits in 2004. In Missouri, the figure was 47%.
- Whites were 37% of TANF recipients nationwide, Hispanics were 19% and all other races were 5%. In Missouri, whites constituted 50% of TANF recipients and Hispanics 2% in 2004.
- Forty-two percent of TANF recipients in Missouri did not graduate from high school, compared with only 15% of non-TANF recipients who did not graduate.
- Eight percent of TANF recipients had at least one year of college, compared with 40% of all non-TANF recipients.

*Source: U.S. Census Bureau*

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# Missouri's Temporary Assistance

In Missouri, the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program is referred to as "Temporary Assistance." The purpose of the Temporary Assistance Program is to provide assistance to needy families with children so they can be cared for in their own home and to reduce dependency by promoting job preparation, work and marriage. Funds may also be used to prevent non-marital pregnancies and encourage the formation and maintenance of two-parent families.

In Missouri, eligibility requirements include:

The child who:

- is under the age of 18 years or 19 and attending high school or equivalent and expected to graduate;
- is in need of assistance because there is insufficient income to meet basic needs;
- is deprived of support because of the death, physical or mental incapacity or the continued absence from the home or unemployment;
- is living with one or both parents or a close relative who makes application for assistance.

and whose parent(s) with whom he or she is living:

- has not been convicted after August 22, 1996 in a Federal or State court of a felony or any crime related to illegal possession, use or distribution of a controlled substance;
- does not own resources valued at more than \$1,000 at application, excluding the home and one car. Recipients may own resources valued to \$5,000 once a self-sufficiency pact is signed;
- assigns his or her rights for child support to the Family Support Division (FSD) and further cooperates in identifying, locating and collecting child support from any parent who is absent from the home because of divorce, desertion, or abandonment;
- uses the money for the benefit of the children;
- attempts to support or help support the children by accepting employment when offered;
- applies for social security numbers for all members of the assistance group;
- is not a fleeing felon and is not in violation of a condition of probation and parole imposed under a Federal or State law.

For Additional information on receiving TANF or eligibility requirements, contact:

Missouri Department of Social Services, Family Support Division  
P. O. Box 2320  
Jefferson City, Mo 65102-2320  
Telephone: (573) 751-3221; Toll-Free: 1-800-735-2466  
<http://www.dss.mo.gov/fsd/index.htm>

In Missouri as of 2004

56.2% of TANF recipients are between the ages of 20-29

95.5% are female and 4.5% are male

92.4% have a high school education or lower

46.3% are black, 50.1% are white, and 3.6% are other races

20.9% are employed

97.5% are single, separated, widowed or divorced parents